

## Interns and Volunteers

The City of Charleston Records Center has a continual need for volunteers and interns to work on a variety of archival projects. This past fall, students **Katie Dykens** and **Melanie Weston** of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation (a collaborative effort between Clemson University and the College of Charleston) gained hands-on experience with the City's Building Inspection Records while completing an internship for Dr. Katherine Pemberton's Research Methods class.

As the oldest municipality in South Carolina, Charleston has long been at the forefront of public policy, especially in regard to building regulations. The City's earliest known building code was implemented shortly after the fire of 1838 "to prevent the erection of wooden buildings, and to provide greater security against fires."<sup>i</sup>

In 1882, the City began requiring owners, architects or builders to submit all plans for construction or alteration of buildings to the City Assessor for approval. A building permit would then be furnished to "such persons only as are regularly licensed by the city to do and perform such work."<sup>ii</sup> The earliest building permits issued by the City of Charleston date from this period and, through a loan agreement reached in 2002, were transferred to the [Charleston County Public Library](#) in order to make the documents more widely available to researchers.

Along with microfilmed copies of building permits dating from 1932 through 1992, the Records Center holds a physical collection of Building Inspection Files spanning from 1978 to 2006. These files consist of building permits and related correspondence, requests to the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals, applications to the Board of Architectural Review, maps, plats, and site plans, flood zone designations, and photographs.



Katie and Melanie's project consisted of interfiling 2005-2006 building permits into the Building Inspection Files. Their assignment was tailored to a semester project involving the creation of a chain of title for a historic King Street property. A chain of title involves recording the succession of title transfers to a particular property. This can be accomplished through locating deeds, but often requires further research. The Building Inspection Files are an excellent source for professional researchers, students, and the general public wishing to trace the ownership of property or research a property's construction history. Working with these files allowed Katie and Melanie to gain valuable hands-on research time while providing a much needed service to the City of Charleston!

For more information about volunteer and internship opportunities, please contact Records Manager Meg Moughan at (843) 724-7301 or at [moughanm@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:moughanm@charleston-sc.gov).

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<sup>i</sup> Eckhard, George B., comp. *A Digest of the Ordinances of The City Council of Charleston from the Year 1783 to Oct. 1844. To Which are Annexed the Acts of the Legislature Which Relate Exclusively to The City of Charleston.* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker & Burke, 1844), 306.

<sup>ii</sup> *The Revised Ordinances of the City of Charleston, South Carolina*, (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Cogswell Co. Printers, 1903), 232. Also see: Bryan, G. D., comp. *The General Ordinances of the City of Charleston, S.C. and the Acts of the General Assembly Relating Thereto*, (Charleston, S.C.: The News and Courier Book Presses, 1882), 145.